



March 9, 2009

Testimony in opposition to:

SB 994 AN ACT CONCERNING LEGHOLD TRAPS

Submitted by: Don Tuller, President, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

The following testimony is submitted on behalf of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, a statewide nonprofit membership organization of nearly 5,000 families dedicated to farmers and the future of Connecticut agriculture.

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy and members of the Environment Committee:

As President of Connecticut Farm Bureau and a farmer, I am submitting the following testimony to express CT Farm Bureau's opposition to SB 994.

Connecticut farmers suffer hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage to crops annually due to wildlife. Leghold and other traps are necessary tools needed to manage and limit devastating and costly crop damage. Proponents of this bill would like you to believe that the use of leghold and other traps is recreational. This understates the importance of the use of these traps to manage and control nuisance wildlife and farmers' ability to produce and provide locally grown foods to Connecticut citizens.

As residential development continues to encroach on farmland, the control of crop damage by wildlife is an increasing challenge and problem. Wildlife migrates across and concentrates on undeveloped working farmland. Regulatory setbacks from houses and occupied structures have made hunting an increasingly less viable option to control predators and other animals. Personally, I'm seeing increasing damage to my sweet corn by coyotes. They bring the ears of corn to the end of the rows and into the nearby field to eat it. They have also adapted quite well to hunting the pets of my neighbors. I had an average of three missing cat posters in my farm store all summer and fall. No one ever came back to take down the poster because their pet came home. We just took down the old ones to make room for the new ones. It's unfortunate that an owl somehow got caught in a trap, but it was newsworthy because events such as these happen so seldom. The hundreds or possibly thousands of pets that are killed by predators each year isn't considered newsworthy because it happens so frequently.

I am not aware of viable options for coyote control without the use of leghold traps. Leghold and conibear traps are necessary tools for the control of nuisance wildlife including, but not limited to, coyote, raccoons, woodchucks and opossums.

CT Farm Bureau urges the defeat of SB 994.

Don Tuller farms with his family on Tulmeadow Farm in West Simsbury.